

## **Press Release**

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### ***UN Commission on Human Rights: No dichotomy between human rights and security***

*There is a risk of a schism developing between security and human rights in the UN itself if the UN fails to reconcile the dual obligations of governments to ensure international security and protect human rights, said Irene Khan, Amnesty International's Secretary General, today as she chaired a panel with other NGOs at the UN Commission on Human Rights.*

*"The Commission must send a clear message that there is no contradiction between human rights and security."*

*Ms Khan spoke at a public event where Amnesty International, Cairo Institute for Human Rights, Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, Human Rights Watch and International Commission of Jurists presented an open statement to the Commission urging states to ensure that any measures they take to combat "terrorism" are in compliance with their human rights obligations.*

*Amnesty International supports Mary Robinson's call for a mechanism to examine the human rights implications of counter-terrorism measures taken by states. The organization would urge that this mechanism be given the authority to advise the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council.*

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the way in which national security has become the predominant concern of many governments at the expense of human rights since the tragic events of 11 September. This includes the suppression of political opponents by branding them as “terrorists”, the creation of shadow criminal justice systems, and a greater reluctance by governments to criticize others’ domestic policies.

The organization has documented new legislation provisions introduced throughout the world allowing for indefinite detention without trial, special courts based on secret evidence, and cultural and religious restrictions. Legitimate refugee and asylum seekers are being curtailed on the grounds of security.

“An accountable state, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law is the best way of countering ‘terrorism’ and violence by armed groups,” stated Ms Khan.

“There is no dichotomy between human rights and security. Effective action against terrorism can be taken without violating human rights. Insecurity is created when their rights are violated -- whether by states or non-state actors.”

Amnesty International and the other organizations signing the open statement also called on the Commission to pay particular attention to the risks to human rights of anti-terrorism measures and that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights produce a report on the impact of anti-terrorism measures on human rights that should make recommendations for their effective observance.

For more information about Amnesty International's participation during the UN Commission on Human Rights, or to arrange interviews please contact Judit Arenas , mobile: + 44 (0) 7778 472 188.

*Information is also available by visiting*

*<http://web.amnesty.org/mavp/av.nsf/pages/geneva>.*